

Message Text

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51

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ARA-06 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

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R 071347Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0904

INFO AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

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CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, UK, XA

SUBJECT: COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING DIS-
CUSSION ON RHODESIA AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

1. LONDON'S FINANCIAL TIMES ON MAY 7 HAS FRONT-PAGE
STORY BY ITS TWO CORRESPONDENTS ATTENDING KINGSTON COM-
MONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING, BRIDGET BLOOM AND
J. D. F. JONES, CLAIMING THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAS A-
GREED TO HOLD A CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE FUTURE
OF RHODESIA WITHIN THE NEXT THREE MONTHS EVEN IF IAN
SMITH REFUSES TO ATTEND. ACCORDING TO FINANCIAL TIMES,
PRIME MINISTER WILSON GAVE THIS UNDERTAKING IN CORRIDOR
MEETING WITH PRESIDENTS OF TANZANIA, ZAMBIA AND BOTSWANA
AND JOSHUA NKOMO. FINANCIAL TIMES CORRESPONDENTS CLAIM
WILSON WILL ANNOUNCE HIS DECISION TO CALL A CONFERENCE TO
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THE HOUSE OF COMMONS IN THE THIRD WEEK OF MAY, WHILE THE

ACTUAL DATE FOR THE CONFERENCE WILL BE ANNOUNCED AFTER CONSULTATIONS WITH THE ANC. AS OF MIDDAY MAY 7, FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE HAD HAD NO REPORT OF THIS ALLEGED CHANGE IN HMG'S ATTITUDE TOWARD CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE. COMMENT: BRIDGET BLOOM IS ONE OF MOST RELIABLE AND WELL-INFORMED BRITISH CORRESPONDENTS WRITING ON AFRICAN AFFAIRS. END COMMENT.

2. THE GUARDIAN ON MAY 7 HAS FRONT-PAGE STORY BY ITS CORRESPONDENT, PATRICK KEATLEY, WHO IS ALSO IN KINGSTON CLAIMING THERE WAS A BITTER STRUGGLE OVER ARMS FOR SOUTH AFRICA DURING FINAL HOURS OF COMMONWEALTH SUMMIT. KEATLEY ALLEGES STRUGGLE WAS OVER PLAN PROPOSED BY COMMONWEALTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS FOR MANDATORY EMBARGO ON SALE OF ARMS TO SOUTH AFRICA WITH AIM OF FORCING FRANCE TO STOP SELLING ARMS TO PRETORIA. BRITISH PRIME MINISTER WILSON REPORTEDLY RESISTED AFRICAN PLAN AND FINALLY WON OUT. FOREIGN OFFICE HAD HAD NO REPORTS OF SUCH STRUGGLE ALSO AS OF MIDDAY MAY 7. COMMENT: KEATLEY IS NOTORIOUS FOR INACCURACIES AND EXAGGERATIONS IN HIS REPORTING. END COMMENT.

RICHARDSON

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